



## Getting ready for Secondary School

This information sheet aims to help you and your child to learn about organisational skills and strategies to assist in secondary school.

### Orientation

- Encourage your child to practise the route to school and class.
- Show them how to look out for signs, posters or pictures to help remember the way.
- Study a map of the school with your child and colour code the classrooms that they will access.
- Prompt your child to pack their bag the night before school.
- Encourage using a locker, but make sure any locks are easy to manage.

### Timetable

- Some schools operate a two-week timetable and have homework dairies, which are completed each day.
- Help your child with the school timetable. Timetables prepared on a word processor are particularly clear. Make more than 1 copy in case of loss or damage
- The use of colour helps some children to read timetables more easily.

### Classroom

- Encourage your child to sit in the middle of the class, facing the teacher.
- Help your child to Colour code the timetable and files to help them to recognise which are needed for each day.
- Use a see-through pencil case to help your child find their pens and pencils more easily.
- A backpack is easier to carry than a single strap and promotes good posture and balance.
- Any written information such as a timetable, handout or textbook needs to be kept simple. A card could be used to block out information in a textbook.
- If recording information in a timely way is challenging, ask the teaching staff if homework or other information may be given as printed sheets to support your child or if the child may use a Dictaphone.
- Your child may have already learned keyboard skills at primary school. If so, you should talk to the teachers at your child's secondary school to ensure that suitable equipment will be available for your child.

### Homework

- If the child is having difficulty with homework, ask the teacher how much time should be spent working at home and help the child to prioritise their workload.
- Encourage your child to keep a list of questions in a homework diary when he or she does not understand something, and to arrange with his or her teacher specific times to go through these questions.
- Encourage your child to plan out and write a list of what they need to do. Ticking off a list at the end can be motivating if it is a realistic length.
- When doing homework, it may help if your child starts with a task they find easier before going on to tackle more difficult activities.
- Organise a desk for your child, so all books can be neatly stored and found. Try to encourage your child to complete homework in this area so books and equipment are not lost around the home.

## **Revision for Exams**

- This is probably the first time that your child has had to work on formal revision for exams. Help may be needed to learn how to revise systematically.
- Making a plan of items to be revised is helpful so that all the necessary work is covered.
- Many children find it effective to work in short concentrated bursts then have a complete change of activity in which to relax. Short periods of work followed by a short period of relaxation are usually best.

## **Lunchtime**

- Encourage the child to use pound coins to buy lunch to save them having to deal with change.
- Make sure that the child is prompted to put their purse/wallet in their backpack and place it on their back before carrying their tray.
- If a knife and fork is difficult, take a packed lunch instead of school dinners. Make sure that your child can open any sandwich box or packets and cartons easily.
- Begin early to teach your child to recognise coins. A small amount of regular pocket money which your child can choose how to spend is a good way of learning to handle money.

## **Dressing**

- Organise your uniform – if the child has difficulty dressing, knot the tie and partially button shirts so they can be slipped on easily.

## **Personal Hygiene**

- If using the toilet is difficult, make sure that the teacher is aware and that the child will need extra time.
- Ask the child to carry a small bag of wet wipes in their school bag.

## **After School Activities**

- Find out if the school run a club and what activities they offer.
- Activities can range from drama groups to homework clubs.
- Non-sports based activities can be ideal, building up your child's self esteem and confidence.

## **Books of interest**

- 100 Ideas for Supporting Pupils with Dyspraxia and DCD (Continuum One Hundreds Series) Lynne Peters 2007. Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd.
- The Adolescent with Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD). Amanda Kirby 2003. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.